Specification

In the specification, on page 8 please replace the second paragraph (lines 4-18) with the following paragraph:

In one embodiment, the signals generated are in the form of a prioritized ad queue comprising static images, dynamic applets, animations and the like. In this embodiment, the ads in the ad queue may be ordered or prioritized for display depending on a variety of factors, including which channel is being tuned to or tuned from, which programming ad was recently displayed, etc. In an alternated embodiment, the ads that are inserted and displayed during the delay period are linked or correlated with other ads, for example, those ads appearing in the programming on the channel from which the channel change is made. Such linking of IPG and programming ads is described in detail in Applicant's co-pending Application number 09/749,255~~XXX,XXX~~ filed on December 27, 2000 entitled "Scheduling and Linking IPG Ads in Conjunction with Programming Ads in a Television Environment", which is herein incorporated by reference.

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended)   In a digital <u>television</u> ~~cable-system~~ environment, an apparatus for inserting one or more local signals during a delay period associated with the execution of a channel change command <u>from a viewing stream to a requested stream</u>, the apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing one or more local signals;

a processor for recognizing the delay period associated with the channel change command <u>from the viewing stream to the requested stream</u>; and

a signal insertion module, coupled to the memory and the processor, for retrieving a local signal from the memory and for inserting the local signal in the delay period<u>, wherein the local signal is inserted at a predetermined point to provide a seamless transition from the viewing stream to the requested stream including the local signal.</u>

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the local signal is a targeted advertisement.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the local signal is an audio signal.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the local signal is a graphic signal.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a demultiplexer for recalculating a new program stream based on the channel change.

6. (Currently Amended) In a digital television ~~cable-system~~ environment, a method for inserting one or more local signals during a delay period associated with the execution of a channel change command from a viewing stream to a requested stream, the method comprising:

recognizing the delay period associated with the execution of the channel change command from the viewing stream to the requested stream;

transmitting a request for a local signal, wherein the local signals are stored in memory;

receiving a local signal in response to the transmitted request; and

inserting the local signal during the delay period, wherein the local signal is inserted at a predetermined point to provide a seamless transition from the viewing stream to the requested stream including the local signal.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is a targeted advertisement.

8. (Original)   The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is an audio signal.

9. (Original)   The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is a graphics signal.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is an HTML page, either locally stored or received real-time from any source.

11. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the local signal is a Java application.

12. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is an analog TV channel.

13. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the local signal is a locally stored MPEG stream.

14. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising a demultiplexer for recalculating a new program stream based on a channel change command.

15. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the predetermined point is an I-frame in a MPEG stream.

16. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the predetermined point is an end of a group-of-pictures in a MPEG stream.

17. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein the predetermined point is an I-frame in a MPEG stream.

18. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein the predetermined point is an end of a group-of-pictures in a MPEG stream.

19. (New)   In a digital television environment, an apparatus for inserting one or more local signals during a delay period associated with the execution of a channel change command, the apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing one or more local signals;

a processor for recognizing an inherent delay period associated with the channel change command; and

a signal insertion module, coupled to the memory and the processor, for retrieving a local signal from the memory and for creating a second delay period for inserting the local signal in the second delay period, wherein the second delay period is longer than the inherent delay period.

20. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the local signal is a targeted advertisement.

21. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the local signal is an audio signal.

22. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the local signal is a graphic signal.

23. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a demultiplexer for recalculating a new program stream based on the channel change.

24. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein inserting the local signal during the second delay period enables the presentation of additional advertisements.

25. (New)   In a digital television environment, a method for inserting one or more local signals during an inherent delay period associated with the execution of a channel change command, the method comprising:

recognizing the inherent delay period associated with the execution of the channel change command;

transmitting a request for a local signal, wherein the local signals are stored in memory;

receiving the local signal in response to the transmitted request;

creating a second delay period which is longer than the inherent delay period; and

inserting the local signal during the second delay period.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the local signal is a targeted advertisement.

27. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the local signal is an audio signal.

28. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the local signal is a graphics signal.

29. (New) The method of claim 25, where the local signal is an HTML page, either locally stored or received real-time from any source.

30. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein the local signal is a Java application.

31. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the local signal is an analog television channel.

32. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the local signal is a locally stored MPEG stream.

33. (New) The method of claim 25, further comprising a demultiplexer for recalculating a new program stream based on a channel change command.

34. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein inserting the local signal during the second delay period enables the presentation of additional advertisements.